

by Peta Koch

## 'CYRANO RELATES A DARN GOOD YARN THAT'S A WINNER'

The flamboyant Cyrano de Bergerac seems the perfect character on which to build a musical.

Australian composer David Reeves (*Seven Little Australians*) and Academy Award winning writer Hal Shaper, who wrote the lyrics of *Cyrano* have seized upon the odd shaped nose and the 17<sup>th</sup> century and have come up with what deserves to be a winner.

This concert version gave a tantalising glimpse of what could be in a full-scale musical.

It has narrative crispness – relating a darn good yarn – and some truly memorable and melodic music which can stand on its own, the mark of a good musical.

Despite some rough edges from under-rehearsal the work, directed by David Bell, made its mark as a concert version, with its rich costuming and judicious use of characterisation, lighting and stage effects.

It was also astutely cast, with most of the performers accomplished enough to slip straight into the real thing if it eventuates.

Normie Rowe made an appealing Cyrano, and was able to step into the skin of the character within the confines of the production.

He managed to capture considerable emotion in his plaintive voice and has a confident vocal range, evident in songs including *Journey to a Woman's Heart* and the stirring, anthem-like *Spirit Candles*.

The find of the production is Miranda Gerhrke, as the object of Cyrano's desire, Roxane, with her clean, pure voice and serene stage presence, highlighted in *I don't Love You Anymore*.

John O'May also shone as the bubbly restaurateur Rageneau. Shane Daly was in pleasant voice as Christian, Roxane's love, and Kirri Adams, as the Duenna, belted out a show-stopper in *A Woman's Work* which begs to be produced as a high-kicking production number.

Sir John Mills may be an accomplished raconteur but his introductory anecdotes about himself and praise of the musical were an unnecessary self-indulgence on the part of the producers.

It would have made more sense to make Mills narrator instead of Rod Henshaw, who nevertheless fulfilled the task adequately.

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